

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TEL AV 04684 161519Z

47

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

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R 161222Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3559

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 4684

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, PFOR, IS, SY

SUBJ: THREAT FROM SYRIA

1. DURING MY CONVERSATION TODAY WITH FORMIN ALLON (SEE SEPTTEL TOMORROW), I REFERRED TO THE SPATE OF "WAR TALK" IN ISRAEL DURING THE PAST WEEKS AND ASKED HIM FOR HIS VIEWS PARTICULARLY ON POSSIBILITY SYRIA MIGHT INITIATE HOSTILITIES IN COMING MONTHS.

2. ALLON REPLIED THAT HE HAD NEVER SHARED THE VIEWS OF THOSE WHO THOUGHT SYRIA MIGHT GO TO WAR IN NEAR FUTURE. HE BELIEVED, HOWEVER, THAT THIS WAS A SERIOUS PROBLEM WHICH HAD TO BE WATCHED CLOSELY AND TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION AS WE PROCEEDED WITH NEXT STEPS IN MID EAST SETTLEMENT PROCESS. HE SAID VISIT OF SYRIAN FORMIN KHADDAM TO WASHINGTON WAS, ON BALANCE, A GOOD SIGN SINCE THIS SHOULD ENGAGE SYRIA IN PROCESS AT HIGH LEVEL AND HELP ENSURE SYRIA WOULD PARTICIPATE IN RECONVENED GENEVA CONFERENCE. ALLON ALSO SAID HE WAS SURE SECRETARY WOULD BE ABLE TO CONVINCE KHADDAM OF NECESSITY OF RENEWAL OF UNDOF (WHICH HE EMPHASIZED WAS A MUST FOR ISRAEL). ALLON ALSO NOTED THAT ISRAELI ENGAGEMENT IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH EGYPT AND JORDAN WOULD "MAKE IT HARDER" FOR THOSE SYRIANS WHO MIGHT WANT WAR TO PREVAIL IN DAMASCUS.

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PAGE 02 TEL AV 04684 161519Z

3. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH ALLON WAS NOT AS EXTREME AS OTHERS (E.G., DEFMIN PERES) RE WARNING OF SYRIAN THREAT, HE HAS CERTAINLY PLAYED ON THIS THEME HERE, AT LEAST ON A SELECTIVE BASIS. A GOOD EXAMPLE WAS HIS DISCUSSION IN MID-JULY WITH SECRETARY SIMON. IN ANY EVENT, HIS REMARKS TODAY WERE QUITE MODERATE AND REASONABLE. IN CONTEXT OF DISCUSSION, IT SEEMS CLEAR HIS VIEWS ON THIS SUBJECT WERE INFLUENCED BY HIS VISIT TO WASHINGTON. KEATING

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